PUZZLE: FIND A CONNECTICUT PUBLIC BEACH

It's a Grand Place for Private Estates on Long Island Sound, but When It Comes to the Ordinary Mortal --- Well, Listen to This Commuter

By ARTHUR CHAPMAN

Illustration by Albert Levering

THE commuter from Connecticut looked appraisingly out upon the landscape, which the haze of the smoking car modified with all the effect of a soft-focus lens.

"Connecticut," he said, "has a shore line which, at least near New York, should appeal to the makers of desert island romance, because there's nothing more remote or mysterious in the world."

Those who were about to drop off on the New York side of the line looked up in polite inquiry.

"What I mean is," went on the Connecticut commuter, "that getting down to the salt water which laves Connecticut's extensive and beautiful shore is a matter attended with many difficulties. To begin at the beginning in my own case, I took my family to Greenwich for the summer, thinking it would be so handy for all of us to take a dip in the Sound when we were so inclined. That there could be any difficulty about getting down to the water never entered my head. Isn't there a corking long shore line on all the maps of Connecticut? Who, on taking a look at that map, would imagine that 99 and 44-100 per cent of that coast—at least within commuting distance of New York City—is not only privately owned but is mostly walled in to such an extent that you can't even get a look, much less a dip?

"Such proved to be the case. I found that there were certain spots where public bathing facilities were provided. But such spots are not only small and far apart, but getting to them is a matter that takes considerable time. The idea of rising in the morning and going out with the family and taking a quick and refreshing plunge into the waters of the Sound and then hitting the commuters' trail for New York, inspired and all that sort of thing—it went glimmering. The reason for its glimmering is found in the fact that Connecticut seems to have let most of its shore line go into private ownership. Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Maine manage to have hung onto their shore rights to a respectable degree, but not so Connecticut.

"Take Greenwich, for instance. A little bathing beach has recently been acquired, down toward Port Chester. But it isn't an altogether desirable beach, especially at low water. Most of the public bathing is done at Island Beach. A little steamer, run by the municipality, takes you out to the island for a small charge. There is a nice beach there, and everything is agreeable. The place is well conducted, the bathhouses are clean and the city keeps out undesirable characters, even going to the extent of giving local residents identification cards, without which the stranger may be denied admission to the beach.

"But even this beach is not the result of official foresight in Connecticut—not at all. The beautiful island simply fell into the pockets of the Greenwich folk, being given by its owner as a public bequest. But, nice as it is, a trip to Island Beach takes time. It means at least half a day, getting over there and back on the steamer and having one's little splash. It's far from offering anything to the individual who wants a quick plunge just before his rush to the city.

"But Island Beach is a fine place for one to observe what has happened to Connecticut's shore line and to speculate on how differently things might have been ordered with a little more foresight on the part of Connecticut lawmakers. From the island one can see magnificent estates stretching to the shore line. The roofs of millionaires' mansions gleam through nicely trimmed trees. There are hedges and walls—always walls—running down to the water's edge. Private docks are visible everywhere, and private beaches, with perhaps three or four individuals sporting about in the water with due formality and solemnity. One cannot imagine any very hilarious scenes on these private bathing beaches, where servitors are standing ever ready to wrap the bathers in robes. Not that I am of a jealous disposition, but I cannot reconcile all this private ownership of the Connecticut shore line with the well advertised canniness of the people of that state. When one thinks of the traditional wooden nutmegs he imagines that the Connecticuters would be the last of all the state clans to have anything 'put over' on them. But perhaps they were so busy selling the little wooden nutmegs back in early days that they let the big things get away. Lots of other people do that very thing every day. Anyway, here's a solid line of beautiful beaches that you can't get to unless you're a guest of the owner of an estate—and the number of acquaintances of mine who own estates could be written down on the cuff of a sleeveless shirt.

"Not only is it a matter of some considerable difficulty to get to the Connecticut shore line, unless you want to run the gantlet of gardeners, chauffeurs, Belgian police dogs and private detectives, but the habit of building walls is growing to such an extent that the view of the water is actually being shut off. When you walk along some of the big estates that extend back in the hills, what do you see but stone walls? Generally, such walls are decorated with sharp stones, broken glass or barbed wire on top—put there, no doubt, to keep the bath-hunting public away from the deleterious effects of salt water.

"Maybe it's figured out that if a householder and his family ever got a glimpse of the Sound from the Connecticut shore, father, mother and the children would make a concerted rush for the beach, and, being unfamiliar with the laws of gravitation in any body of water larger than that in a bathtub, would immediately drown. Therefore, in order to avert such tragedies, Connecticut highways on Long Island Sound are being walled in so that it is only by reason of tradition and the study of maps that the average individual knows there is such a body of water in existence.

"If this thing keeps up one can imagine the real estate dealer of the future taking a family out to inspect a place which commands a lovely view, not of the Sound itself, but of one of the most ornate walls shutting off the view of the Sound. On the strength of the view, which is hidden behind this wall, and which his father's father once saw, probably the real estate agent can get a snug extra rental. The householder could dwell behind such a wall in real contentment, no doubt, letting his imagination picture the scene on the other side—the open Sound, the pleasure craft skimming over it, and the splashing made by some portly and wealthy land owner taking a dip all by his lonesome self on a beautiful beach five hundred feet long and flanked with keep-off signs. In fact, if I wanted to engage in another line of business from the one which I am following now, I'd believe I'd turn sign painter and specialize in keep-off signs for Connecticut shore line property. Either that or go into the business of masonry contracting and specialize in high walls for the shore line.

"Of course, there's nothing to be done about it, but you can imagine what the shore line communities a hundred years from now are going to pay per foot for any public bathing beaches that they may set out to buy. It seems to me the Pilgrim Fathers overlooked the greatest chance of their eventful lives when they didn't declare that every other section of land all the way along the stern and rockbound coast should be forever set aside from Indians and stock brokers, and that permission to set aside bathing beaches should be granted in all these publicly owned intervals of shore line, and that, furthermore, any person who built a wall of masonry more than four feet high around an estate commanding a view of the open water should be judged by a committee of alienists, and, if proved to be a victim of the wall-building mania, should be condemned to spend every summer pacing up and down behind walls of his own making—and on the landward side of such walls.

"But the founders of Connecticut don't seem to have had the New York commuter in mind at all. Otherwise I wouldn't be taking home these seashells—bought in New York City—for placing along the garden walk in my yard. And I wouldn't have to restrict my marine views to paintings—also purchased in New York City—which I have hung about my cottage walls at home.

"Not all the members of the family are so badly off as I am, though. The other day my little daughter came home delighted. It seems that she had scraped acquaintance with the fifth daughter of an under-gamekeeper or a second gardener, or something of the sort, on one of the shore estates, and some time this week this little girl friend of hers is going to smuggle her behind the biggest and highest wall and the two kids are going behind some magniferous boulders right at the water's edge and have a wading party—if the chief chauffeur doesn't catch them and fire them out.

"As for me—to-morrow's Sunday, and I'm going to take the rest of the folks along, with our bathing suits, and we're going to hunt a public beach and take our chances with the crowd. Then we're going out across the Sound on a ferry, and if there's any Connecticut native son who gets to pointing out all the estates along the shore line and telling who owns all those private beaches I'm going to throw him overboard."

ONE WHITE CHIP IN A STACK OF REDS

(Continued from page six)

are welcome at any hour of the day or night.

Bull Eagle caught my fancy first. He was the most flamboyant in his personal appearance, always overdressed, and, painted in gorgeous hues of red, yellow and green, he satisfied my boyish taste, and therefore I sought his company when I rode to the little town of Baxter Springs. There I would buy him sticks of colored candy, of which he was very fond, and one day, at his request, I purchased a tiny mirror encased in a narrow gilt frame. This warmed his heart, and on our ride back to the reservation he gazed in the glass continually and laughed heartily when I told him he was a pretty boy. This he learned to say, and whenever he gazed in his mirror in my presence he would repeat, with a sheepish grin: "Me pretty boy."

Bull Eagle was an aristocrat. He came of a long line of good stock, and as the thoroughbred differs from the cart horse so Bull Eagle differed from his tribesmen. His features were finely drawn. He had a splendid head which he carried high, his nose was delicately and finely shaped, his mouth slightly arched, while his chin was strong and firm. Straight as an arrow, he carried himself with dignity and ease. His family were looked up to by the tribe. His father was rich in ponies and his three sisters were considered most desirable property in the matrimonial market for some young brave of good character and a sufficient number of ponies to seek in marriage.

Wah-nop-e-tonga was close. Even his friends admitted it. He was shrewd in a bargain, and was not averse to taking a mean advantage on every occasion. The better element of the tribe did not approve of his ways and were suspicious of his accumulations in livestock or wordly goods. He treated his shrewdness as a joke and had learned to wink like the white man whenever he was questioned as to his methods. Little Bull had no worldly goods excepting his one shabby change of clothes, which consisted of a faded blanket, leggings, shirt and moccasins; but, oh, his spirits! Always laughing and joking. He visited with one family after another, for he had no wife or tepee of his own. With the children of the tribe he romped and played. Drawing his blanket over his head and cavorting on all fours, he would pursue them and imitate the bear. He would poke fun at some "dandy" in the tribe, and then scamper off, challenging his opponent to catch him. He could outrun most any of his fellows, but they were not to be outdone by a joker and often the racers continued their pursuit for twenty minutes or more to the encouragement and laughter of the villagers, who had thronged out of doors to watch them.

Pierre Michell was a half-breed, massive in build, stern and dignified in manner. He was domineering in his manner, insisted upon his orders being carried out—a browbeater—and when in his cups he was most ferocious. The Indians feared him, and to show his importance he pitched his lodge away from the camp on a rise of ground overlooking his tribesmen. His daughter, a fine specimen of Indian girlhood, carried her head high when she mingled with the tribe. She was not popular with her sex, but when she favored a young man with her smile—and she was a desperate flirt—he met her advances with all the fervor the Indian nature can evolve, which consists of drawing the blanket over the face when the girl is met, or carrying the water from the spring for her. This he may do before he becomes a warrior, but not after. Pierre had the half-breed's disdain for the full-blooded Indians, and considered them lazy, good for nothing children, while he lolled about and was full of mental activity as to what he was going to do when "all 'Injun' got white man's ways."

Wah-ha-be-ze was a gambler, the most inveterate gambler in the tribe, and his ways were not good for the young men of his age. He was but twenty-four, sly and secretive. He would entice the young men of his set to a hidden spot in the brush, and there they would play moccasin until all their worldly goods had been lost or won, as the case might be. I remember seeing him one day conducting his party of five into the woods. They would not let me come along if I would not tell. I promised. Soon the secret spot was reached. Seated on the ground, facing each other, three on a side, the game began. Three moccasins were placed upon an open blanket which was spread upon the ground. To a low chant the "dealer" made passes with his closed hand in which he held a metal ball. This he deftly placed under one of the moccasins. His opponent, seated opposite to him, smote the moccasin with a rod under which he had "guessed the ball." If he failed to "call" it he lost, and it counted against his score. Wah-ha-be-ze in the short space of two hours lost his beaded blanket, his deerskin leggings, his bracelets, moccasins, pipe and tobacco bag—all these of fine Indian workmanship—and I saw him sneaking homeward at dusk, his entire apparel consisting of two eagle plumes and a single shirt. He smiled as he met me, for he was a good sport, and warned me not to tell the agent—it didn't matter about his folks, as they knew he was a naughty boy. An Indian was wicked only when his "heart was bad." Then his intention was to kill, but naughtiness was a trifle and covered most every other failing.

A half-breed who went by the name of Joseph No Good was thoroughly disliked by the entire tribe. His own parents would have little to do with him. He might eat at their tepee, but not with them. A surly, beetle browed young man of some thirty years, slovenly and unclean, he held the office of "slavey" to any one who chose to employ him and would give him tobacco to chew in return for his services. He never smoked, but was wedded to the weed in plug form. He never took part in their dances or ceremonies, nor did he mix with the throng, but sulked in his exquisite loneliness on some adjacent hilltop. Several times this worthy threatened to kill me, for no other reason than that it pleased his fancy at the time. His English vocabulary consisted of all the oaths he could acquire. When I told Bull Eagle of Joe's threat he laughed and offered me his hunting knife, instructing me as to the method I should use in sticking Joseph should he attempt to kill me. I refused his offer, whereupon he agreed to talk to "that yellow dog" and give him some advice.

When my time was up I shook hands with Baptiste as I started homeward. I told him that I had changed my views as regards the "Injun" and that they were "just same as white man—some good, some bad, and some just old fool."

THE LATIN QUARTER OF THE UNITED STATES

(Continued from page three)

embroideries repose where once old Dobbin used to nose his hay.

You can get anything you want in Hyannis: Russian crash (no relation to politics), Oriental rugs, even that rarest of all institutions on the Cape, a shampoo. As for its tea rooms, they offer a post-graduate course in sandwiches to the proprietors of all the other tea shops on the Cape.

Mashpee's interest is that of the family skeleton. It is the ape's dark spot, the blot on the sand dunes.

We had heard about Mashpee from time to time as a town made up of Indians, and our interest was immediately stimulated. But it seems that residents of the other white, well kept towns resent this hybrid village. Mashpee is not on the postcard road maps which are to be found in every souvenir shop and "tonic" dispensary on the Cape. It is not mentioned on the discreet white signboards at the various crossroads. Questions as to how to reach Mashpee meet with evasion on the part of the old setlers.

"Oh, Mashpee!" is the contemptuous answer usually given. "You don't want to go there."

"There's nothing but a few shacks at Mashpee," one more explicit man finally told us, "and there's not a full-blooded Indian in the place. They have all intermarried with negroes, and they're a shiftless lot. The men don't do anything much; their wives take in washing for the rest of the Cape."

"But the main automobile road goes through Mashpee, doesn't it?" I asked, for I had been dipping into a large road map in Hyannis which revealed this hitherto guarded secret.

"It does, but it shouldn't," was the answer. "The old sand road didn't. Now you take the old sand road after you get to Santuit, and you'll not only save several miles but you'll see one of the most historic old churches on the Cape," and our informant launched into an enthusiastic description of the church and only stopped when we had agreed to forego Mashpee.

But after our perfect Cape Codder was out of sight we went right on to Mashpee.

"Let's find out what it is they disapprove of so," said the Bookworm, while I remarked that we had seen plenty of old churches, from the Sir Christopher Wren tower in Provincetown to the infinitely more graceful spire at Sandwich that looks like Sir Christopher Wren and isn't.

We reached Mashpee on a Sunday morning about 11 o'clock—obviously early for Mashpee—after a walk of several miles through scrubby pine woods with a dense undergrowth of dwarf oak and blueberries. There were no white cottages with sea-green shutters and silver doorknobs, no velvety lawns, no tea rooms, nothing—only a road winding through the woods with unpainted, pop-eyed cabins strug along here and there and the spire of the Baptist chapel showing white above the trees. The washing of the summer visitars flapped on the clotheslines in the rear of a few of the shacks, but most of them did not show even that evidence of industry. In front of one house a women was combing her hair at a rickety bureau set out by the roadside. At another a few dark, disreputable children came out and looked at us curiously, and were immediately recalled by a maternal voice full of panic. Down the road came a blackskinned man on a bicycle, followed by a small copper-colored child. The sun beat down on the bright, bare road with its one signpost to indicate that this was a town, and it boxlike postoffice.

"Shiftless," was the delighted murmur of the Bookworm, whose attitude toward the New England housewife is tinged with malice.

And that was all of Mashpee, the town without a gift shop.

Mashpee is near the lower end of the Cape, and beyond it there is nothing else as hectic as Provincetown or as commercially glorious as Hyannis. There is Cotuit, where at night the first families stalk through the dark streets carrying ordinary farm lanterns because the nouveau riche carry electric flashlights. There is Falmouth, scene of a breath-taking competition in gift shops. And there is Woods Hole, from which one can conveniently start for home, with the roll of the surf still in one's ears, the ache from the cornhusk mattress still in one's neck, emptiness in one's pocketbook and in one's heart the peace of the Cape, that even summer tourists cannot entirely destroy.